



**North Carolina Department of Health and Human Services
Office of Public Affairs**

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Lenoir Community College to host

**Big exercise prepares EMS responders and other
healthcare workers for challenging evacuations**

RALEIGH – Lenoir Community College is the site Thursday of the state's biggest hurricane evacuation exercise for 2008.

Dubbed METTA2, for Medical Evacuation Triage and Treatment Assessment, the exercise is designed to test and enhance North Carolina's ability to shelter medically fragile populations. This is accomplished by evacuating an area affected by a mock catastrophic event such as a hurricane. It is the state's second METTA exercise. Last year's exercise was held in Onslow and Surry counties.

The 2008 exercise tests the skills of first responders and other healthcare workers as they identify and relocate mock patients to safe and appropriate accommodations. During the exercise, more than 300 college students will portray frail and elderly nursing home, hospice and homecare, assisted living, and other patients that may reside in state regulated facilities.

"This not only helps sharpen critical skills that need to come into play in the event of a hurricane," said Drexdal Pratt, chief of the N.C. Office of Emergency Medical Services, "it also helps us to identify any weaknesses that need shoring up to ensure our first responders and other healthcare workers are ready to perform at peak efficiency. That's important to us, and to the populations we serve."

Other participants in METTA2 include the N.C. Department of Agriculture, N.C. Division of Public Health, N.C. Division of Emergency Management, Lenoir Community College, Lenoir County Department of Emergency Services, Duke University Medical School, Campbell University School of Pharmacy, and American Red Cross.

The exercise will reflect realistic conditions. It ties to state standards that call for using a community college to establish a large medical shelter. In the event that local and regional plans or systems could not cope with the need to shelter citizens requiring skilled medical care, a community college may be used to shelter and care for these citizens until proper placement can be arranged.

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Location: 101 Blair Drive • Adams Building • Dorothea Dix Hospital Campus • Raleigh, N.C. 27603

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